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To: R7 Senior Staff [R7_Senior_Staff@epa.gov]
Subject: OPA Daily Clippings - 2/10/21

R7 IN THE NEWS

Omaha World-Herald - Ethanol plant near Mead has stopped production, state says – 2/10/21 -

An ethanol plant near Mead, the subject of complaints about foul odors and health concerns for the past two years, has shut down operations in compliance with an emergency state order issued Thursday. <http://bit.ly/3aQU5aT>

KHGI Ch. 13 Kearney NE - Ethanol plant shut down after order from Nebraska Department of Environment and Energy – 2/9/21 -

The ethanol plant AltEn, LLC near Mead shut down at 4 p.m. on Monday, according to the Nebraska Department of Environment and Energy (NDEE).

<http://bit.ly/3jzPXQy>

KHGI Ch. 13 Kearney NE - Mead resident reacts to ethanol plant shut down – 2/9/21 -

After years of fighting they have finally gotten the order to shut down. In the village of Mead, an ethanol plant was producing toxic byproducts and community members said it is causing health problems across the community. <https://bit.ly/3aQCYGh>

Lincoln (NE) Journal-Star - Troubled ethanol plant near Mead completes state-ordered shutdown – 2/9/21 -

An ethanol plant near Mead that uses pesticide-treated seed corn complied with an order to shut down its operations, the Nebraska Department of Environment and Energy said Tuesday. <http://bit.ly/2OIk7LT>

Maryville (MO) Forum - 2021 dicamba use requires training update – 2/9/21 -

On Oct. 27, 2020, the EPA approved registrations for two dicamba products, XtendiMax with VaporGrip Technology and Engenia Herbicide, and extended the registration of Tavium Plus VaporGrip Technology. All three registrations include new control measures. <http://bit.ly/3a7gxNR>

KCIM Carroll County Broadcasting (IA) – 2/9/21 - Sen. Ernst Continues Push To Promote Biofuels And Uphold The Renewable Fuel Standard – 2/9/21 -

Biofuels have become commonplace in cars and trucks across Iowa and the United States, but concerns are growing among some farmers and politicians from agricultural states that the Renewable Fuels Standard (RFS) will be set to the wayside under the Biden administration. <http://bit.ly/2Z51tKw>

St. Louis Call - MSD \$500 million bond issue, Proposition Y, goes to St. Louis County and city voters in April – 2/4/21 -

The Metropolitan St. Louis Sewer District is asking voters in St. Louis County and the city of St. Louis to make a decision this spring on a \$500 million bond issue that will increase wastewater rates to pay for the sewer district's \$1.58 billion consent decree with the federal government. <http://bit.ly/2Z1kYU8>

REGIONAL

Midwest Energy News - State energy plans show how process can match final product in impact – 2/10/21 - The experience in Iowa and Missouri shows how drafting an energy plan can help shape a state's energy direction, even if policymakers don't always follow it. <http://bit.ly/3tKFUwQ>

Des Moines Register - Group takes aim at large livestock operations it says pollutes Iowa's water – 2/9/21 - Citing what it says is mounting public support, a group of environmental, legislative and farm leaders called Tuesday for a moratorium on new confined animal feeding operations, saying the large-scale livestock-raising facilities pollute Iowa's water and air and harm rural communities. <http://bit.ly/3rE6XYP>

Mason City (IA) Globe Gazette - Factory farm opponents call for 'bold action' from Iowa Legislature – 2/9/21 - Advocates for a moratorium on factory farms warned that time is running out for Iowa, but conceded it's unlikely the Republican-controlled Iowa Legislature will approve their proposal. <http://bit.ly/37ihuRV>

Salem (Mo.) News - Montauk recycling program wins award – 2/9/21 – Staff at Montauk won second place in the Show Me Challenge back in December with their new recycling program. <http://bit.ly/3qeHvJi>

KZIM Radio Cape Girardeau MO - CDC Reports Decreases in Blood Lead Level Testing Among Young Children During COVID-19 – 2/9/21 - Southern 7 Health Department (S7HD) reported that the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has released findings showing significant decreases in testing of blood lead levels in young children during COVID-19. <http://bit.ly/3jBMPni>

Webster County (MO) Citizen - U.S. Farmers and Ranchers in Action Mobilizes Tech and Finance Sectors to Fulfill Agriculture's Potential as a Climate Solution – 2/10/21 - U.S. Farmers & Ranchers in Action (USFRA) today issued a new report¹ that analyzes the state of soil health technology and identifies opportunities to find new sources of capital to scale-up the adoption of climate-smart agriculture on farms and ranches across the U.S. <http://bit.ly/3a4vINl>

Mason City (IA) Globe Gazette - Forest City School Board approves firms for solar generation project – 2/9/21 -The Forest City School Board on Feb. 8 unanimously approved entering into a contract agreement with ISG and Consulting Engineers Group (CEG) to design and plan a future solar generation project on undeveloped school grounds behind its baseball and football fields. <http://bit.ly/3a58b9p>

Pratt (KS) Tribune - Responses starting to come after blind-siding lawsuit over water rights comes from Audobon of Kansas – 2/9/21 - U.S. Senator Jerry Moran (R-Great Bend) and several Stafford County farmer/rancher landowners responded last week, to a January 16, 2021 lawsuit filed by Audubon of Kansas regarding water rights for Quivira National Wildlife Refuge. <http://bit.ly/3p2fMde>

Hutchinson (KS) News - 'A double standard': Water is everywhere, but not in western Kansas – 2/8/21 - Edwards, Ellis, Russell and Stafford counties sit at the bullseye of a major water issue. A wildlife refuge needs water for its migrating birds, farmers need water to manage their crops, industry needs the commodity to increase capacity and local municipalities, Hays and Russell, need water for their citizens. <http://bit.ly/3aOz9S8>

2021 TRANSITION

Lexology - Environmental Outlook: Expectations for Environmental Regulation under the Biden Administration – 2/9/21 - Even before Joseph R. Biden was sworn in as the 46th president of the United States on January 20, 2021, there was widespread commentary on the steps he would take to restore environmental protections that the new administration felt had been compromised over the past four years. President Biden began implementing his environmental agenda on day one and hasn't slowed down yet. <http://bit.ly/3aPLoh6>

DTN Progressive Farmer - Regan Nomination Heads to Full Senate | If Confirmed, EPA Administrator Nominee Faces Issues Surrounding RFS, Water Rule – 2/9/21 - Concerns were raised by several committee members about whether the Regan-led EPA would repeal the Trump Navigable Waters Protection Rule in favor of a rule similar to the 2015 WOTUS rule. <http://bit.ly/3q8Y3SO>

Biden's new conservation corps stirs hopes of nature-focused hiring spree – 2/10/21 - A 1930s initiative that tackled environmental woes and unemployment could inspire the new administration's plans to confront the climate crisis. <http://bit.ly/3jDZTJ6>

CORONAVIRUS

KMBC Ch. 9 Kansas City - 8.9% of Missouri population has received at least one vaccine dose – 2/9/21 - The Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services said Tuesday there have been 467,313 cases of COVID-19 since the start of the outbreak and 7,143 deaths. Overall the state said 8.7% of the population has received at least one dose. <http://bit.ly/3jzwnUL>

Inside EPA – Finance center finds ongoing adverse COVID-19 impacts for utilities – 2/9/21 - New research from the Environmental Finance Center at the University of North Carolina is highlighting the ongoing challenges from the COVID-19 pandemic for drinking water and wastewater utilities in the state, showing both the need for continued short-term financial assistance and long-term resiliency planning. <http://bit.ly/2NfFDB4>

Des Moines Register - Iowa has fewer than 300 people hospitalized with COVID-19, a 5 month low – 2/10/21 - Iowa continues to see some coronavirus improvements, with fewer than 300 COVID-19 hospitalizations for the first time since September and no counties reporting a 14-day positivity rate higher than 15%. <http://bit.ly/3aWsUeQ>

St. Louis Call - Missouri data shows expanding 'vaccine deserts' in St. Louis and Kansas City metros – 2/8/21 - An expanding portion of St. Louis and Kansas City are considered "vaccine deserts," or areas with limited-to-no access to the COVID-19 vaccine, according to an analysis by a consulting firm hired by the state. <http://bit.ly/3q9PPtH>

FUELS

Farm Progress - EPA urged to reject RFS compliance deadline extensions – 2/10/21 - Biofuel groups were united in their testimony Tuesday urging the Environmental Protection Agency to reject calls to delay the Renewable Fuel Standard compliance deadlines for the 2019 and 2020 Renewable Volume Obligations. <http://bit.ly/3tEI6WJ>

Biomass Magazine - Groups testify against EPA's proposed RFS deadline extensions – 2/9/21 - Representatives of the biofuels industry testified against the U.S. EPA's proposed extension of the 2019 and 2020 Renewable Fuel Standard compliance deadlines during a Feb. 9 virtual hearing. Public comments on the proposal can be filed through March 11. <http://bit.ly/3rSnh8D>

KIWA Radio Sheldon Iowa - Reynolds moves to establish Iowa biofuels standard and increase availability – 2/9/21 - Yesterday, Governor Kim Reynolds introduced a bill into the Iowa Legislature to establish biofuel standards for fuel sold across Iowa and to provide Iowa retailers with increased funding to upgrade infrastructure to offer higher blends of ethanol and biodiesel. <http://bit.ly/2MPJLba>

Ethanol Producer Magazine – Opinion: A New Chapter for Ethanol Demand and Policy – 2/9/21 - The ethanol industry laid a strong foundation during the 2020 presidential campaign, ensuring that no path to the White House would be paved without answering to voters in rural America and including farmers in the fight against climate change. <http://bit.ly/3p9yC1Y>

Brownfield Ag News – The Ethanol Industry's Long Road to Recovery – 2/9/21 - An ag economist says recovery to the ethanol industry continues to face an uphill climb following the disruptions from the coronavirus pandemic. <http://bit.ly/2OktefL>

Iowa Farm Bureau - Iowa Farm Bureau Federation statement on developing Iowa biofuels standard – 2/9/21 - Iowa Farm Bureau Federation President Craig Hill: "The Iowa Farm Bureau applauds Governor Reynolds' efforts to set a biofuels standard in Iowa. By raising the floor for biofuel blends and increasing the percentage of ethanol and biodiesel sold in Iowa, we can create growth opportunities in renewable fuels for our rural communities and farmers. <http://bit.ly/3tEPP7b>

FreeThink - Electricity and Chemistry Could Give Biofuels a Big Boost – 2/10/21 - Scientists discover a new chemical reaction needed to create "helper molecules" many biofuels require. This promises a cheaper, more efficient way to "go green." <http://bit.ly/2Z6tsJA>

KMZU Radio Columbia, MO - Hoskins 'hopeful' in passage of Missouri Made Fuels Act to aid state's soybean farmers – 2/9/21 - Sidelined last year due to the pandemic, Missouri State Sen.

Denny Hoskins, R-Warrensburg, is pressing ahead with the Missouri Made Fuels Act to bring biofuels into the state's diesel consumption. After all, Missouri is where biofuels began. <https://bit.ly/3aR8yDU>

Inside EPA – EPA Asks D.C. Circuit To Halt 2020 RFS Suit Over Challengers' Objections – 2/9/21 -

EPA is asking a federal appeals court to halt litigation over its renewable fuel standard (RFS) biofuel blending targets for 2020 pending the resolution of a Supreme Court case over EPA's policy on RFS compliance waivers for small refineries, but renewable fuels groups and refiners challenging the rule say they oppose delaying the suit. <http://bit.ly/3cYTg2t>

Inside EPA - Refiners, Biofuels Groups Clash Over EPA Plan To Delay RFS Compliance – 2/9/21 -

Refiners and biofuels groups are fighting over the Trump EPA's proposal to delay renewable fuel standard (RFS) compliance deadlines, with refining groups backing the move and urging the Biden administration to finalize it but biofuels groups condemning it as an 11th-hour effort by the Trump administration to "undermine" the RFS. <http://bit.ly/2OhHENK>

NATIONAL

The Hill - EPA alleges political interference by Trump officials over toxic chemical – 2/9/21 -

The EPA on Tuesday asserted that political appointees from the Trump administration interfered with a safety assessment for a chemical linked to health issues. <http://bit.ly/372CZpt>

E&E News - Biden won't revive Obama's Clean Power Plan. So now what? – 2/9/21 -

"The reality is that [the lack of an existing standard] presents a significant opportunity for the EPA to take a clean slate and look at how do we best move forward," Regan told the committee. "There are lots and lots of, I would say, examples of success and failure that we've seen in past tries." <http://bit.ly/2Z0bFno>

Brownfield Ag News – Anaerobic Digesters Bring New Partnerships & Income to Dairies –

2/9/21 - An alliance of food and farm groups expects widespread expansion of biogas digester projects this year. <http://bit.ly/2OqQvwP>

Yale Environment 360 - As Plastic Pollution in Rivers Gets Worse, Species Are Increasingly

Living on Litter – 2/9/21 - Now, new research has found that as plastic waste accumulates, aquatic river species like insects and snails are increasingly choosing to settle on plastic rather than natural features like rocks or fallen branches. <http://bit.ly/2NgQzhP>

Associated Press - Hack exposes vulnerability of cash-strapped US water plants – 2/10/21 -

A hacker's botched attempt to poison the water supply of a small Florida city is raising alarms about just how vulnerable the nation's water systems may be to attacks by more sophisticated intruders. Treatment plants are typically cash-strapped, and lack the cybersecurity depth of the power grid and nuclear plants. <http://bit.ly/3p6PO8x>

The Hill - Key House Democrat urges 'economywide' approach to climate change – 2/8/21 -

Rep. [Paul Tonko](#) (D-N.Y.), a leading Democrat on environmental issues, said Tuesday that he hopes to take an "economywide" approach to combating climate change this session. <http://bit.ly/2Z2dxlB>

The Fence Post - Updates to conservation easements strengthens protection for farmlands, grasslands and wetlands – 2/9/21 - The USDA released the final rule for its Agricultural Conservation Easement Program, which enables agricultural producers and private landowners to protect farmlands, grasslands, and wetlands with conservation easements. <http://bit.ly/2LBSPjI>

AP - Coca-Cola is introducing its first bottle made from 100% recycled plastic – 2/10/21 - Coca-Cola is launching a new bottle size for the first time in a decade, but it's what the bottle's made of that marks an even more notable first: 100% recycled plastic material. <https://bit.ly/2LBVbPd>

The Guardian - 'People should be alarmed': air pollution in US subway systems stuns researchers – 2/10/21 - Riders in major cities, especially New York, encounter particle quantities well above safe levels. <http://bit.ly/3d1elt1>

Reuters - Fossil fuel pollution causes one in five premature deaths globally: study – 2/10/21 - Pollution from fossil fuels causes one in five premature deaths globally, suggesting the health impacts of burning coal, oil and natural gas may be far higher than previously thought, according to a study published on Tuesday. <http://reut.rs/3a5kR0e>

Washington Post - Countries must ramp up climate pledges by 80 percent to hit key Paris target, study finds – 2/9/21 - The pledges countries made to reduce emissions as part of the 2015 Paris agreement are woefully inadequate, and the world must nearly double its greenhouse gas-cutting goals to avoid the most catastrophic effects of climate change, according to research published Tuesday. <http://wapo.st/3q9Orat>

Bloomberg Law - Water Plant Cyberattack Raises Critical Infrastructure Concerns – 2/10/21 - A cyberattack on a Florida water treatment plant underscores the need for strong security protections at the municipal level, attorneys and industry professionals say. <https://bit.ly/3tlfcEZ>

Bloomberg Law – Politics Trumped Science in PFAS Chemical Review, EPA Says – 2/9/21 - Political interference during the Trump administration compromised the EPA's review of the hazards of a "forever chemical," the agency said Tuesday, pledging to point out that and other problems in the agency's analysis. <https://bit.ly/3jCDTOx>

Bloomberg Law – EPA Accused of Allowing Soot in Air to Harm Endangered Wildlife – 2/9/21 - The Center for Biological Diversity in a novel legal challenge accused the Environmental Protection Agency of failing to consider wildlife in its air quality laws for harmful soot pollution. <https://bit.ly/2Nfd86y>

Bloomberg Law – Fossil Fuel Pollution Kills 8.7 Million a Year, Twice Previous Estimate – 2/9/21 - Efforts to slow the process of global warming focus on the future harms of continuing to burn fossil fuel, but new research released Tuesday shows that deadly consequences from pollution are killing larger numbers of people right now than had been assumed. <https://bit.ly/3p6rDXJ>

Bloomberg Law – EPA Watchdog Flags Chemical Board Information Security Flaws – 2/9/21 - The federal agency tasked with investigating chemical releases across the U.S. faces security system

weaknesses that present challenges to its operations, the Environmental Protection Agency's Office of Inspector General said in a new report. <https://bit.ly/3jFRMvI>

Bloomberg Law – White House to Steer Environmental Policy With Senior Leaders – 2/9/21 -

The White House Council on Environmental Quality named a group of senior employees on Tuesday who will lead the small office's outside role in setting policy on climate change, environmental justice, sustainability, and other issues at the core of President Joe Biden's agenda. <https://bit.ly/2NeP6sE>

Bloomberg Law – Georgians Accuse Ethylene Oxide Emitter of Being 'Silent Killer' – 2/9/21 -

Georgia residents lambasted a sterilization plant in an Atlanta suburb over its emissions of a carcinogenic gas used to clean medical equipment during a public hearing Tuesday on draft plans to grant an air quality permit. <https://bit.ly/3jBj2em>

Inside EPA - EPA Pulls Controversial PFBS Assessment, Citing 'Political Interference' – 2/9/21 -

EPA has withdrawn the Trump administration's controversial Jan. 19 toxicity assessment of perfluorobutanesulfonic acid (PFBS), a document that critics say would have set an adverse precedent limiting how states, industry and other risk managers could apply chemical studies, saying it was the product of "political interference." <http://bit.ly/2MRvD1e>

Inside EPA – House Democrats Eye 2030 Emission Targets For Revised Climate Bill – 2/9/21 -

Senior Democrats on the House Energy and Commerce Committee are considering including a 2030 emissions target in revised climate legislation lawmakers are expected to soon introduce, an approach that will mirror new commitments the Biden administration and other countries will offer under the Paris climate accord. <http://bit.ly/2Z43vui>

Inside EPA – EPA plans to integrate EJ Screen tool in rulemakings – 2/9/21 - EPA will pursue a "more integrated approach" for using its environmental justice (EJ) screening and mapping tool, EJ Screen, including using the tool for rulemakings this year, an agency spokeswoman says.

<http://bit.ly/3a7IC7V>

Inside EPA – PM2.5 deaths study raises pressure on EPA to tighten NAAQS – 2/9/21 - A new study from international researchers underscores the significant adverse public health impacts of fine particulate matter (PM2.5) air pollution, bolstering environmentalists in their push for the Biden EPA to tighten the national ambient air quality standards (NAAQS) for PM2.5 that the Trump EPA refused to strengthen. <http://bit.ly/2NfwoRH>

Inside EPA - Broad Coalition Urges EPA To Reverse Trump-Era Safer Choice Cuts – 2/9/21 - An alliance of major chemical industry groups, state and local regulators, individual companies and environmentalists is urging EPA to reinvigorate its Safer Choice labeling program for household products made with less-toxic materials, building momentum for efforts to undo Trump-era cuts to its staff and resources. <http://bit.ly/2Z6ADBv>